

# CHAPTER 2

## Existing Conditions and Community Needs

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the context for the Bikeways, Trails, Parks, and Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan), key findings about the system, and the community needs addressed by plan recommendations. The assessment of existing conditions in Morgan Hill was foundational to the master planning process. The project team collected and analyzed data to understand the condition and use of the existing parks, recreation, bikeways, and trails network. To augment this analysis, extensive public and stakeholder engagement solicited input on community values, priorities, and specific needs. Because community participation was fundamental to this planning process, themes from public engagement activities are woven throughout the findings presented here.

### LOCATION AND SETTING

The City of Morgan Hill is located in Santa Clara County, south of San José at the edge of the quickly growing Silicon Valley region. The area was originally developed as farmsteads surrounded by orchards and ranches. Since that time, Morgan Hill has grown into a vibrant, family-friendly community of 43,645 (as of January 2016), composed of suburban neighborhoods, diverse businesses, with a vibrant Downtown. The City covers approximately 13 square miles and is surrounded by small farms and wineries. Residents value Morgan Hill's rural small-town character, range of recreational choices, and access to neighboring urban and recreational amenities. Highway 101 provides a major north-south transportation connection and Caltrain offers additional regional access via the Downtown Morgan Hill Station.

Vast open spaces surround the City, including working agricultural land and Santa Clara County Parks and Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA) preserves. Anderson Lake County Park skirts the outer north-east boundary of the city, Coyote Lake Park is located to the south-east, and the expansive Henry W. Coe State Park is farther afield. Additional parks and preserves are located west of the City. There are also rich recreational resources within the City itself including a variety of parks, community gardens, recreational facilities, trails, and historic and cultural resources.

Morgan Hill offers opportunities for healthy, active living for residents of all ages. The City enjoys a strong cycling presence, hiking/running clubs, and a range of community events such as a Downtown farmers market, music/art events, festivals, fun-runs, parades, and historic and cultural events. The City also regularly hosts a range of regional sporting events including soccer, lacrosse, running, cycling, and others.

Morgan Hill's bikeways, trails, parks, and recreation system includes community and neighborhood City parks, privately-developed and owned parks, recreation facilities, trails, and on-street bike routes. (See page 2-25 for a map of the system and Appendix A for a complete inventory.) Many of Morgan Hill's parks and recreation facilities are relatively new and continue to expand and diversify with the growing community.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

### Key Findings

- **Morgan Hill's population is steadily growing.** The City can expect continued growth; however, it will likely occur more slowly. The current Residential Development Control System (RDCS) sets a 2035 growth ceiling of 58,200.
- **Morgan Hill is a relatively young community with a growing older population.**
- **Planned growth in the short- and medium-term will occur within the existing city boundaries** while longer-term expansions may include current county unincorporated lands.
- **The Morgan Hill community is growing more ethnically diverse with an increase in Hispanic and mixed-race residents.** In keeping with local and statewide trends, this pattern is likely to continue.

### Overview

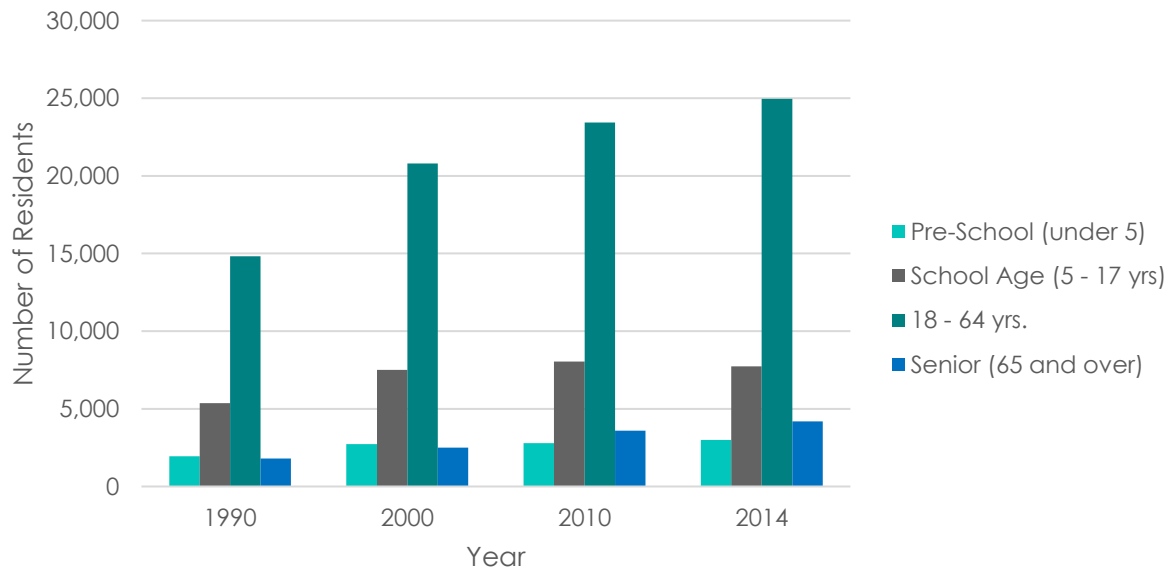
Morgan Hill's residential population has been growing steadily since the 1990s and this growth is expected to continue. Morgan Hill's residential population as of 2016 is 43,645. The RDCS set a 2035 growth ceiling for Morgan Hill of 58,200 to ensure well-paced, orderly development and to encourage infill development rather than additional development into surrounding agricultural and open space lands.

The growth occurring in and around Morgan Hill will impact its bikeways, trails, parks, and recreation system as existing and future residents and visitors seek open space and recreation opportunities. The City will be challenged to maintain its current facilities and service levels, while planning for a larger population and adapting to changing demographic conditions.



Relative to other cities in Santa Clara County and California as a whole, Morgan Hill has more children, more adults between 45 and 64, and a smaller share of young adults. There are more residents under the age of 18 (about 30 percent of the population) and fewer residents over the age of 65 in Morgan Hill than in surrounding Santa Clara County and the State of California. However, residents in the 55-to-64-year-old age range have been the fastest-growing population segment in Morgan Hill over the past decade. If these residents age in place, the 65-to-84-year-old age group will be Morgan Hill's most rapidly growing age group in the next two decades.

**Figure 2-1: Population by Age in Morgan Hill, 1990-2014**



Morgan Hill and Santa Clara County are more affluent than California overall. In 2013, median household incomes in Morgan Hill (\$95,531) were 55 percent higher than the State median income (\$58,724) and higher than the County median income (\$91,702).

In keeping with statewide trends, the City's Hispanic/Latino and Asian populations are growing while the White population is declining. A significant number of Morgan Hill residents are bilingual. About 10 percent of residents speak a language other than English (primarily Spanish and Asian Pacific Island languages) and are not fluent in English.

These demographic trends inform this Master Plan's recommendations. By evaluating and planning for changes in the Morgan Hill population, the City can continue to ensure the parks and programs serve families with children (who are a core market segment), engage newcomers and growing demographic groups, and consider the evolving needs of aging adult households who create a demand for new facilities and programs.

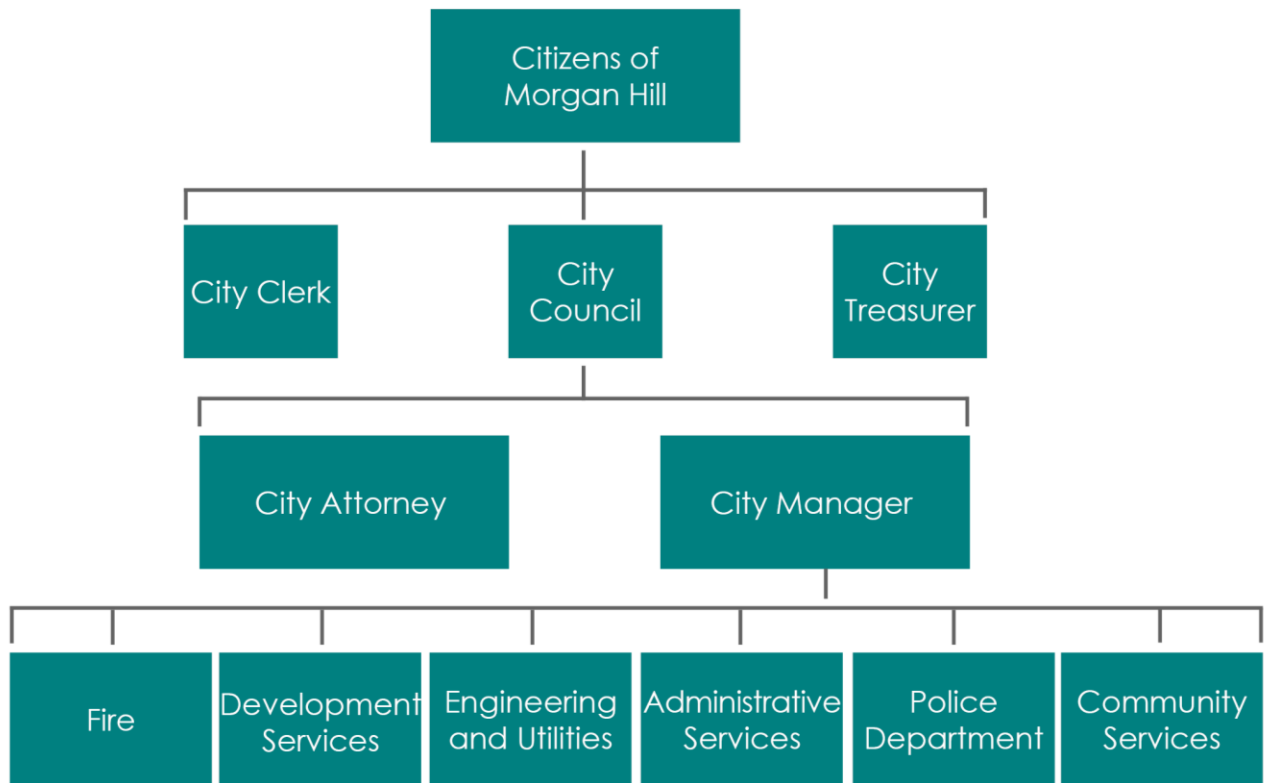
## CITY FINANCING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Morgan Hill City Council is comprised of five elected officials, including the mayor, who make decisions related to General Fund discretionary spending as well as plans and policies. The Council appoints three advisory commissions that provide expertise in specific policy areas, including the Library, Culture and Arts Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC), and Planning Commission. The Council and PRC were active in the development and review of this Master Plan. Commissioners reviewed planning documents throughout the process and participated in community outreach events.

The City of Morgan Hill uses a biennial budgeting process that begins in January with City Council adopting its priorities, goals, and strategies for the City and the community. The City's General Fund supports many of the City's public services including police, fire, recreation, street maintenance, municipal governance, and administrative services. Most General Fund revenue is generated from property taxes, sales tax, recreation revenue, and Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT).

The City's strong recreation revenue stream is generated from membership sales, program registration, and facility rentals. To ensure the City has the resources to operate and maintain its recreation facilities, the City's strategy is to increase membership rates once every three years (January 2018, 2021, etc.). The Adopted Operating and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2016-17 and 2017-18 budget includes rate increases for Aquatics Center daily admission, room rental at the Cultural and Community Center (CCC) and at the Centennial Recreation Center (CRC). Furthermore, additional programs are planned for adult sports leagues, Older Adult Services, Villa Mira Monte, History Park and fee-based events at the CCC. The community's ongoing interest in recreation programs indicate that sports and other programs will continue to be a strong revenue stream for the City. The City is experiencing a historically high level of revenue from TOT due to a strong economy, the regional use of the City's Outdoor Sports Center and Aquatics Center, and a burgeoning tourism economy.

Figure 2-2: City of Morgan Hill Organizational Chart



## PARKS

### Parks: Key Findings

- **Parks are important spaces to Morgan Hill community members for healthy activities** including walking, running, sports, and fitness, as indicated by community engagement results.
- **Several of the City's parks were developed as mini parks** and thus are exceptionally small and offer limited activities.
- **Many residents use adjacent County Parks (Harvey Bear, Anderson Lake, Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve, and Coyote Creek Trail) as neighborhood or community parks** for activities such as picnics, dog-walking, and passive recreation.
- **More shade and restrooms are needed** to improve comfort and enable longer stays in high-use parks. Community members also expressed the need for more water fountains and filling stations.



- **Some neighborhood parks are located adjacent to or near public schools**, but access to school facilities is limited or restricted.
- **More than half of Morgan Hill's City-owned parkland is concentrated in the City's two community parks** and most of that acreage is within Community Park.
- **Parks and park amenities can be better distributed across the system.** Morgan Hill's northeast neighborhoods are outside of walkable City park service areas. The most popular parks, as well as key features such as indoor recreation and dog parks, are concentrated in the southern part of the City. As such, they are difficult for many residents to access, particularly without a car.
- There is enthusiasm and demonstrated interest in **additional park facilities Downtown for gathering, events and play**, including the Downtown Parks currently in development and the Villa Mira Monte History Park.
- **Private parks in Morgan Hill provide tremendous benefit to the community.** The City's RDCS has helped to encourage the construction of private parks across the City.



## Parks: Existing System

Morgan Hill is served by neighborhood, community, and privately-owned parks. Together, these parks provide opportunities for a range of recreation experiences. Morgan Hill residents also frequently use the neighboring Anderson Lake County Park and Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch County Park for outdoor recreation. The table below describes the classifications of parks that comprise the Morgan Hill parks and open space system. These classifications were established by the previous Master Plan (2001). This Master Plan (2017) recommends new classifications (see Chapter 4) that better serve Morgan Hill's parks evolving system.

Table 2-1: Existing Park Classifications (2001)

Park Classification	Typical Size	Service Area	Description
<b>Mini Parks</b>	Less than 3 acres.	Immediate Neighborhood	Mini Parks were historically constructed in Morgan Hill to provide open space to the immediate neighborhood area. Most are 1.5 acres or smaller.
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	3 to 10 acres	Walking distance (1/2-mile walkshed)	Neighborhood Parks are intended primarily for the enjoyment of nearby neighbors within a short walk or bike ride. These parks often include traditional recreation amenities such as playgrounds, sport courts, and open turf play areas. They serve as social gathering spaces and may also include natural areas.
<b>Community Park</b>	10 or more acres	Citywide	Community Parks focus on meeting the recreational needs of the community at-large. They allow for group activities and other recreational pursuits that are not recommended at neighborhood parks.
<b>Non-Recreational Open Space</b>	No minimum or maximum size	Citywide	Non-Recreational Open Space is not publicly accessible. It protects ecological functions and scenic or heritage resources valued by residents. Non-recreational open space is managed by the City's Parks & Recreation Department.
<b>Private Recreational Open Space</b>	No minimum or maximum size	Neighborhood served by residential development	Recreational Open Spaces provide publicly accessible undeveloped recreation opportunities and opportunities to be in nature. They also protect ecological functions and scenic or heritage resources. At the time of this Master Plan, the City does not own or manage any Recreational Open Spaces, however there are privately owned Recreational Open Spaces.

<b>Privately-owned Parks</b>	Depends on facility	Neighborhood served by residential development	Privately-owned Parks are generally within a residential area for the exclusive use of residents and are privately developed and maintained by the homeowner or resident association or property managers.
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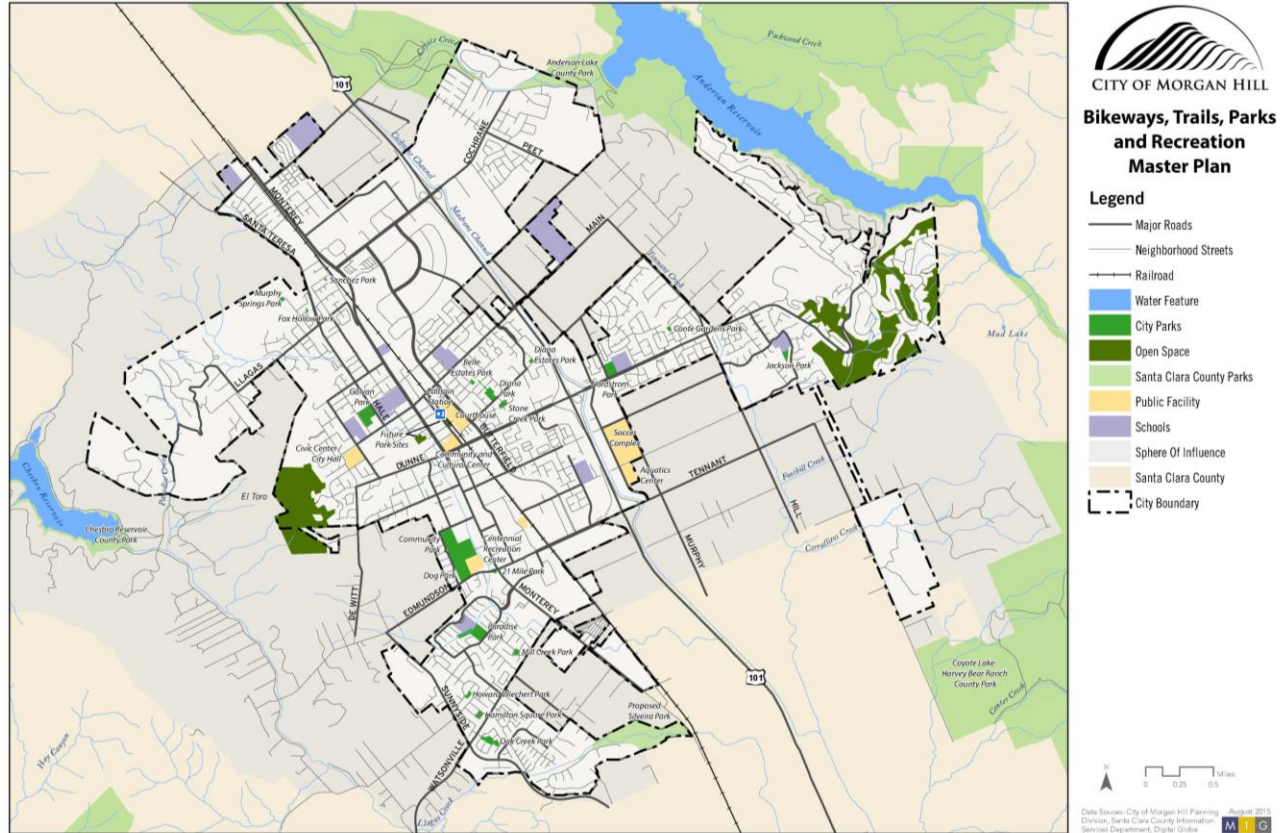
### City Parks

Several of the City’s neighborhood parks are very small “pocket” parks, classified as mini-parks, designed to serve the adjacent residential community. Historically, these mini parks were built by the City and developers. In recent years, the City has moved away from constructing these because of their limited size and ability to provide amenities. However, mini parks have proven to be successful in Downtown Morgan Hill where people are looking for less traditional park experiences. Other local parks—notably Nordstrom and Paradise Parks—are larger and attract residents from other parts of the City. These high-use neighborhood function as small community parks and may include features and amenities such as playing fields, water fountains, or restrooms.

Larger community parks also meet the needs of neighborhoods, but are intended as "destination" parks with special facilities, such as lit sports fields, amphitheaters, or gymnasiums that serve the entire community. Restrooms, off-street parking, night lighting of facilities, and other active recreation facilities are typical community park elements that encourage higher levels and longer hours of public use and longer user-days compared to neighborhood parks. Morgan Hill currently has two designated community parks, Community and Galvan Parks, with multiple amenities. More than half of Morgan Hill’s parkland is concentrated in the City’s two community parks and most of that acreage is within Community Park.



Figure 2-3: Morgan Hill's Existing City Park System



In addition to these parks, the City owns large open spaces on its east and west ends—Jackson Oaks and El Toro. Both open spaces have limited public access. The City's land on the east face of El Toro is adjacent to Santa Clara OSA land. The City is working with the OSA and neighboring property owners to acquire additional land needed to develop a trail on the back side of El Toro to the Peak. Jackson Oaks open space, above the Jackson Oaks neighborhood, is currently undeveloped without trails or access points. Past efforts to develop public trail access to Jackson Oaks have been met with strong resistance from the Jackson Oak residents,

The following table includes an inventory of all City parkland. A complete inventory, including homeowner association parks and park amenities, is included in Appendix A.

Table 2-2: Morgan Hill Parks Inventory (2016)

Park	Park Classification (2001)	Acres
21 Mile	Mini	0.65
Belle Estates	Mini	0.46
Civic Center / City Hall	Mini	2
Community Park	Community	26

Park	Park Classification (2001)	Acres
Conte Gardens	Mini	0.50
Diana	Mini	0.50
Diana Estates	Neighborhood	3.08
Depot Street Park ( <i>in development</i> )	Mini	.30*
Fox Hollow	Mini	0.20
Galvan	Community	7.50
Hamilton Square	Mini	0.57
Howard Wiechert	Mini	0.90
Jackson Park	Mini	1.30
Llagas Creek Park & Hilltop Park ( <i>in development</i> )	Neighborhood	4.30*
Mill Creek Park	Mini	0.93
Murphy Springs Park	Mini	0.49
Nordstrom Park	Neighborhood	4.57
Oak Creek Park	Neighborhood	2.93
Paradise Park	Neighborhood	5.47
Sanchez Park	Mini	0.16
Stone Creek Park	Mini	0.95
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>59.16</b>

\* Not counted in the current 2016 level of service calculations

### Park Maintenance

The City maintains its existing park and trails system through a coordinated effort of the Community Services Department Maintenance Team. The Department is responsible for all City maintenance functions relating to streets, sidewalks, open space, parks, trails, recreation facilities, and buildings. Major capital project management is provided through the Engineering and Utilities Department. The City maintains all these facilities using a small team (15) of full time staff and a wide variety of contract services, with support from part-time

seasonal staff. This model provides for flexibility in maintenance services and the opportunity for innovative approaches to maintenance.

Maintenance of recreation facilities and City buildings has been prioritized and these facilities are maintained at a high level. Maintenance of parks is considered average as compared to other cities, with many areas that can be improved. While it is anticipated that costs for maintaining additional facilities will increase, it is not anticipated that increased funding will be provided to improve the level of maintenance. The City strives to find innovative ways to improve maintenance through efficiency.

#### Privately Owned Parks and Open Spaces

Privately-owned parks and open spaces provide close-to-home benefits and function as pocket or neighborhood parks. However, because they are privately funded and operated, access is often limited to members of the homeowner or resident association. Community members have expressed interest in expanding the accessibility of privately-owned parks. The 2035 General Plan supports improving public access to these parks by converting appropriate private HOA parks to public neighborhood parks with HOAs that are interested in evaluating this opportunity.

**Table 2-3: Privately Owned Park and Open Space Acreage**

Park	Acres
Private Parks	46.1
Private Open Space	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>64.1</b>

#### Regional Park Resources

Morgan Hill's proximity to regional park and open space facilities provides its residents with many benefits, including opportunities for: access to nature, boating, hiking, running, mountain biking, horse riding, and more. Henry Coe Park is the second largest park in the state and is within a 30-minute drive of the City. Additionally, Santa Clara County Parks and the Santa Clara Valley OSA operate thousands of acres of recreational open space within minutes of the City. Throughout the master planning process, residents indicated that County Parks are among their most frequently used parks, especially for exercise. This Master Plan focuses on enhancing connections and access to these exceptional regional assets.

**Table 2-4: County Parks Proximate to Morgan Hill (2016)**

Park	Park Ownership	Acres	Distance in miles from Morgan Hill City Hall
Anderson Lake	Santa Clara County Parks	3,144	4

Park	Park Ownership	Acres	Distance in miles from Morgan Hill City Hall
Coyote Lake Harvey Bear Ranch	Santa Clara County Parks	4,595	7
Coyote Creek Trail	Santa Clara County Parks	NA	4
Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve	Santa Clara Open Space Authority Preserve	348	6
Henry W. Coe State Park	Santa Clara County Park	87,000	14

### Morgan Hill Schools

Morgan Hill Unified School District (MHUSD) includes eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. Some of these schools include playground and field facilities that are desirable to Morgan Hill community members. However, many schools limit access to their facilities during evenings and weekends by locking gates. During this master planning process the City initiated conversations with MHUSD to establish joint-use agreements for school sites that enhance the City's park offerings. For example, Nordstrom Elementary School's amenities augment the adjacent Nordstrom Park, a popular neighborhood park.

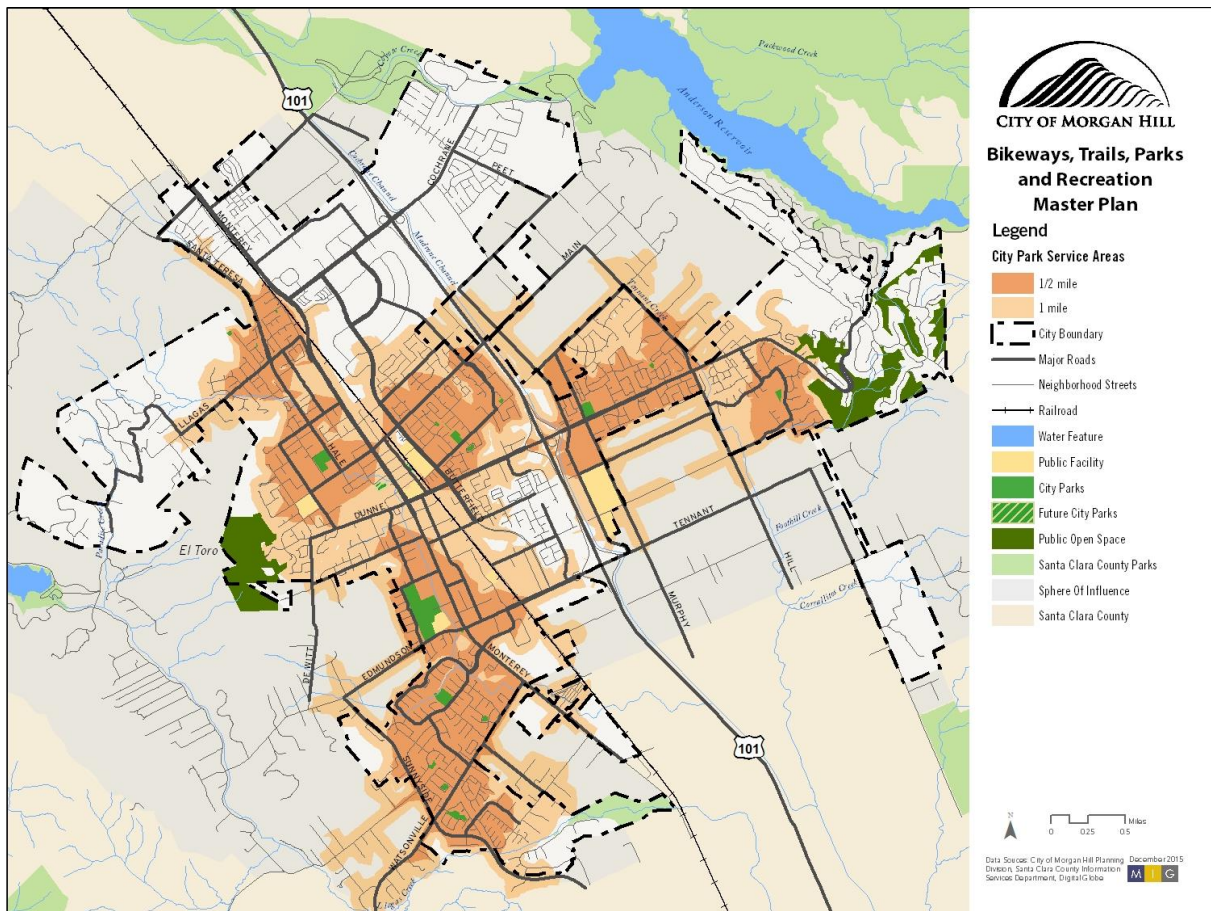
**Table 2-5: Morgan Hill Unified School District Schools Proximate to City Parks**

School
Nordstrom Elementary School
(Lewis H.) Britton Middle School
Ann Sobrato High School
Barrett Elementary School
Central Continuation High School
El Toro Elementary School
Jackson Academy of Math and Music
P. A. Walsh Elementary School
Paradise Valley Elementary School

## Parks: Geographic Analysis

As the Existing Park Classifications table (2-1) shows, Morgan Hill has a service distance target for each type of park. The park system was evaluated from a walkability perspective using these distances. To conduct the walkability analysis, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model was used to identify “walksheds.” This approach reflects the way people move through the City and accounts for physical barriers that impede access. The desired travel distances used were ¼-mile and ½-mile, reflecting research on the distance a typical person can walk in five and 10 minutes. (See Figures 2-4 and 2-5 for an illustration of park walksheds.) When evaluated together, these methods of measurement provide a well-rounded picture of how well the park and recreation system is serving the community.

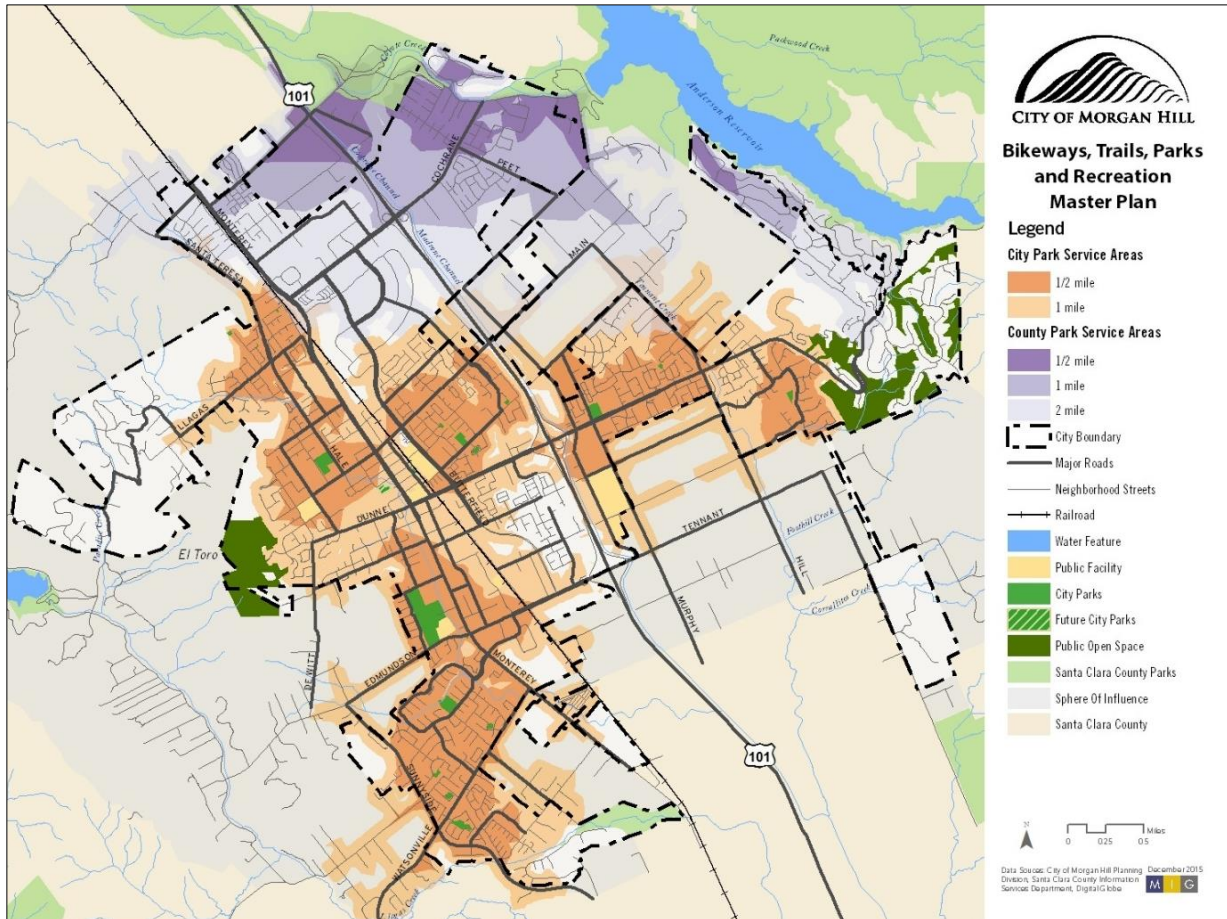
**Figure 2-4: City Park Service Areas**



The Morgan Hill park system is generally accessible to most residents. There are a few service area gaps in the northeast and central southern areas of the City. Some of the gap areas are in commercial and industrial areas or residential estate and low-density neighborhoods with large lot sizes. Other gaps are in denser residential neighborhoods, where there is a need for increased access to recreational opportunities. The adjacent County Park facilities fill some of this need for residents in north and northeast neighborhoods. In some cases, these gaps may be addressed through improved bicycle and pedestrian and transit connections to existing parks. In other areas, they may be best addressed through the development of new parks.



Figure 2-5: Park Service Areas including adjacent County Parks



## Parks: Existing Usage and Needs Analysis

Data collected through an online mapping questionnaire, an online survey, intercept surveys community workshops, and the stakeholder advisory group provided insights into community members’ park usage and preferences. The Project Team analyzed which parks are most heavily used. The community input revealed that Morgan Hill community members are using regional parks, Community Park, and Paradise and Diana Parks frequently and that regional parks are among community members preferred parks for exercise and physical activity (see Figure 2-8). Community members are taking their children to the playgrounds at neighborhood parks. However, survey results showed that Paradise, Diana, and Nordstrom are strongly favored even by residents who live outside of those neighborhoods. This imbalance in park use may be addressed by adding amenities like those in the most frequently used and liked parks to less popular neighborhood parks.



Figure 2-6: Community Member's Favorite Parks

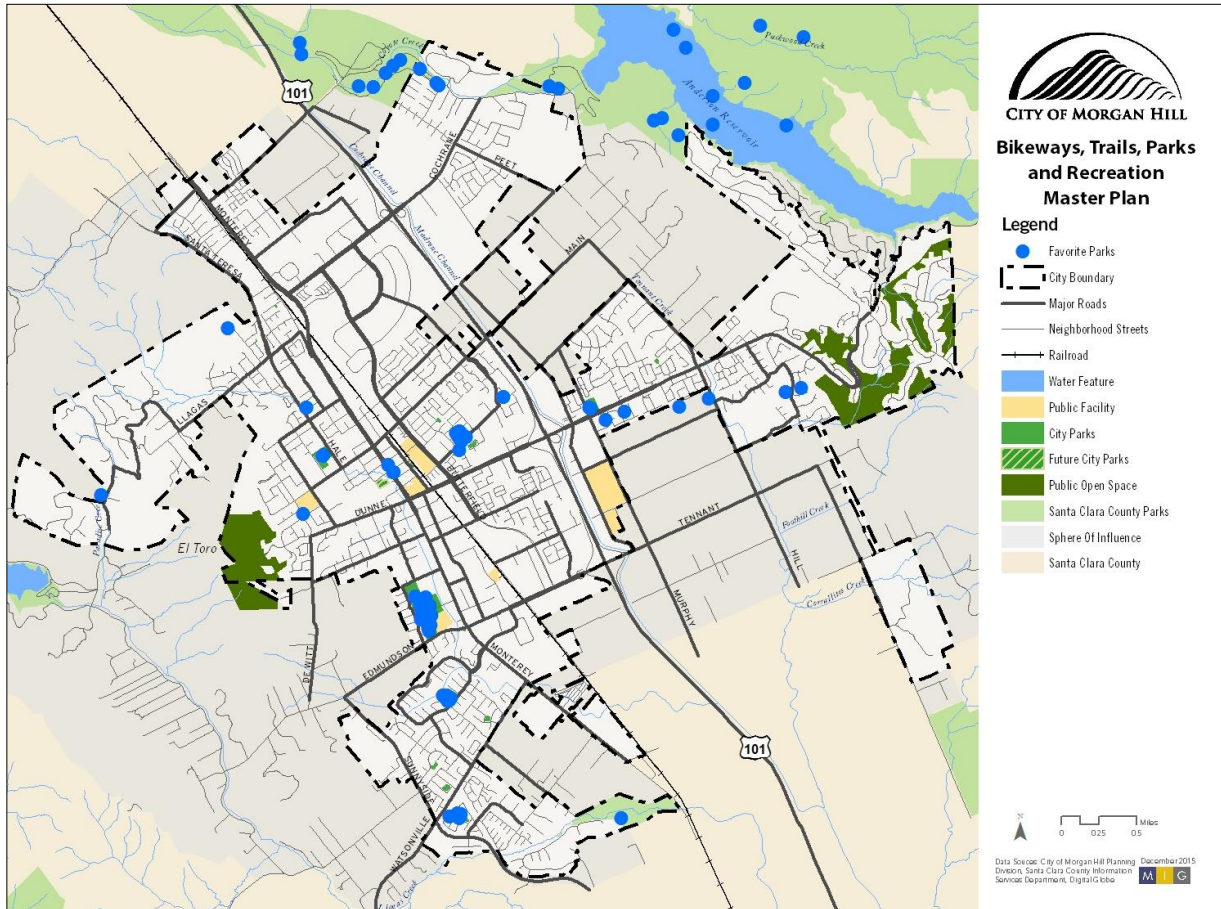
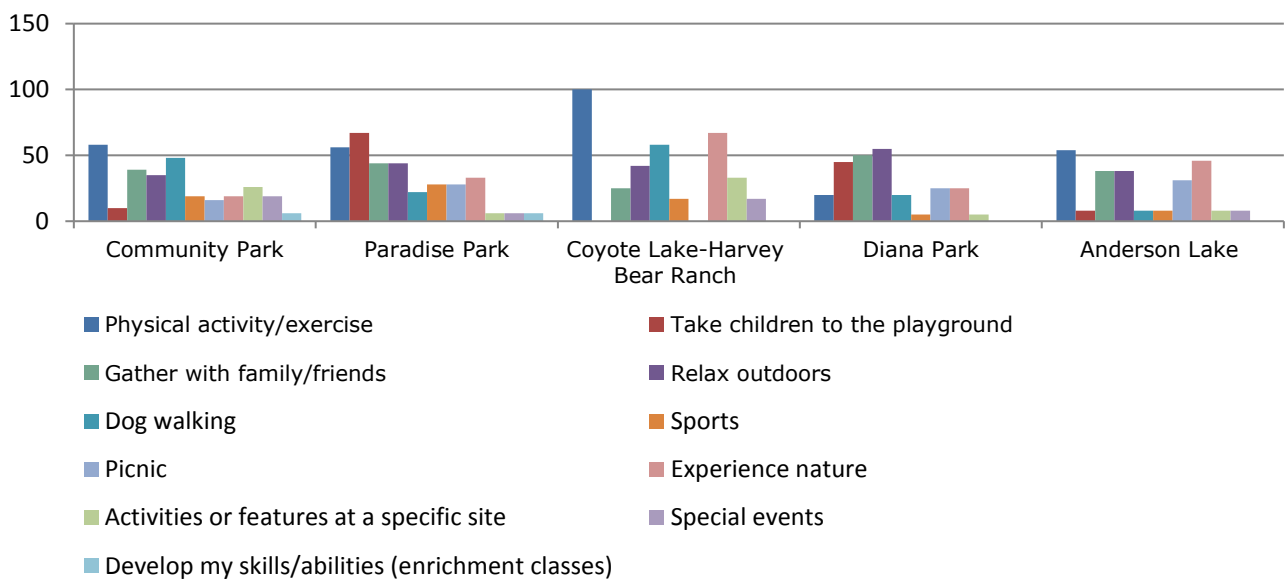


Figure 2-7: Activities in Residents' Top 5 Favorite Parks



## YOUTH WORKSHOP

On July 19, 2016, the Morgan Hill Youth Action Council hosted a workshop with the project team to receive input from teens in the community. There were about 40 participants. The teens were asked to identify their priority investments in three of Morgan Hill's frequently used neighborhood parks— Nordstrom, Paradise, and Diana. The results point to improvements that can help to make parks more engaging for teens, including:

- Add more drinking fountains, trash cans, and trees in Diana Park.
- Add restrooms to Nordstrom and Paradise Parks.
- Add interesting seating to Diana and Nordstrom park.
- Integrate dynamic play elements such as climbing walls, parkour features, and exercise equipment.



## RECREATION FACILITIES



### Recreation Facilities: Key Findings

- **There is strong demand for additional field capacity, gymnasium spaces and aquatic facilities.** The City already enjoys high levels of aquatic service on a per capita basis but peak hours at the pools are often crowded. Community members support joint use agreements with schools to help address these needs.
- **Morgan Hill is planning to expand its regional sports park facilities** including improved OSC /AC parking and expansion of the CRC. This will support its continued growth as a tourism destination.
- **The City is well-positioned to develop a sand volleyball complex.** Sand volleyball is a fast-growing sport. However, few dedicated facilities have been developed in Northern California or the country at large.
- **There is strong support for further developing the City's historical and cultural resources,** including adapting and enhancing Villa Mira Monte as a History Park to preserve and educate the community.
- **Local access to regional facilities** is critically important to Morgan Hill. Access to existing facilities should be protected and enhanced, and local access should be guaranteed for any new developments.
- **Balancing cost recovery and community access is essential** for operation of the City's recreation facilities. Given the City's limited discretionary general



fund revenue, recovering a high percentage of costs is the only viable option to operate the recreation facilities.

- Morgan Hill residents have demonstrated a **willingness to pay for services and the use of recreation facilities**. Residents pay for use of facilities via memberships, program registration, facility rentals, and day use passes.
- **Operational partnerships at recreation facilities have been very successful**. The largest partnerships include the integrated partnership model for operating the CRC with the YMCA and the concessionaire agreement with the Morgan Hill Youth Sports Alliance (MHYA) at the Outdoor Sports Center (OSC).
- **Improvements are needed at the Outdoor Sports Center** to support its continued use and to ensure it remains a successful regional destination.

## Recreation Facilities System



The City of Morgan Hill has a network of highly-valued recreation facilities that house many of the City's classes, camps, and programs. Its assets include the OSC, Dennis Kennedy Aquatics Center (AC), CRC, CCC, and El Toro Youth Center. Some of these facilities are multi-purpose and others are special-use. Construction of recreation facilities was previously funded through Redevelopment Agency (RDA) funds. Since the State Legislature dissolved RDA's in 2011, these funds are no longer available to support facility construction. These facilities serve the Morgan Hill community and attract users from throughout the region and even the state.

The Morgan Hill community recognizes and values its extensive, high-quality system of recreation facilities and programs. City leaders support Morgan Hill's identity as a sports tourism destination to benefit the local economy, and residents enjoy access to state-of-the-art facilities. Continuing to expand and diversify the City's recreation tourism offerings is a key economic development policy in the adopted 2035 General Plan. Given the important role that recreation facilities play in the City's Economic Development Strategy, City Council supported further study of the impact of its largest facilities –the Aquatic Center and Outdoor

Sports Center—as well as opportunities for enhancing the sports tourism market of Morgan Hill. The study, included as Appendix D to this Master Plan, evaluated the current condition and use of the Aquatic Center and Outdoor Sports Center. The study also includes recommendations and strategies to enhance the sports tourism market of Morgan Hill. These recommendations have been incorporated into Chapter 4 of this plan.

The OSC has played a significant role in establishing Morgan Hill as a sports tourism destination. Currently operated by the Morgan Hill Youth Sports Alliance, the OSC generally operates under the goal of 60 percent local use and 40 percent non-local use. Most local use occurs on weekdays while regional events typically occur on weekends. Actual use depends on team availability and maintenance. During the last Fiscal Year (July 2015-June 2016), aside from local use, the OSC hosted 33 tournament events attracting approximately 140,000 attendees. The facility is projected to hold a similar number of events during FY 2016-2017. Overall, the Outdoor Sports Complex is in fair condition. The field turf will likely need extended maintenance or replacement, as it is approaching the end of its useful life.

The Aquatic Center also supports Morgan Hill's sports tourism and its location adjacent to the OSC provides opportunities for coordinated efforts. Throughout 2015 and 2016, the Center held 21 swim meets, attracting almost 37,000 visitors. The Aquatic Center hosts regional and national swim events and is also heavily utilized by residents and visitors for recreational swimming. Overall, the facility is in good shape and the most significant need is more parking.

The City offers a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities available for rent, including the CCC and Community Playhouse, Community Park (stage, gazebo area, picnic areas, tennis court), the recreation center, and senior center. Sport fields and picnic shelters are available for rental at Community Park, Galvan Park and Paradise Park. The AC, CRC Pool and Party Room, Downtown Amphitheater, Council Chambers, and a variety of rooms in the CCC are available for group and party rentals. The AC is available to host swim meets. These facilities meet a diversity of community needs while contributing to the City's cost recovery.

Morgan Hill is home to various facilities that are not owned or managed by the City but contribute to Morgan Hill's network of recreational and cultural attractions. The Villa Mira Monte property is one of these unique sites. It is owned and managed by the Morgan Hill Historic Society and is a 2.5-acre site that is listed on the National Registry of Historic Landmarks. The site includes the Hiram Morgan Hill House, built by the City's namesake in 1884, as well as a museum. The Hiram Morgan Hill House offers a unique rental venue. The Historic Society is seeking a partnership with the City to further develop the site and maximize its potential as a historic and park resource. Chapter 4 of this Master Plan includes high-level recommendations for the City's role in the future of the Villa Mira Monte property.

The following Recreation Facility classifications were established by the previous Master Plan (2001). This Master Plan (2017) recommends new classifications (see Chapter 4) that better serve Morgan Hill's evolving parks and recreation system.

**Table 2-6: Morgan Hill Recreation Facility Classifications (2001)**

Classification	Service Area	Description
<b>Sports Park</b>	Citywide. All residents, community-based sports organizations, and school groups; may serve non-resident sport participants for tournament and regional play.	Sports Parks focus on active recreational facilities, especially for organized sports. Consolidation of multiple sports fields at one location allows for efficiencies of maintenance and scheduling. With a focus on active sports, sports parks do not have all the amenities of community parks. A sports park should maximize time available for local use while remaining financially sustainable. A Sports Park helps to meet the local demand for sports fields.  These properties were purchased or designated for this specific purpose, or were acquired to take advantage of a unique feature.
<b>Special Use Facility</b>	Citywide	Special Use Facilities provide space for specialized park and recreation functions, often with a single major use. These facilities may draw visitors from around the region.

Counting both existing and planned facilities, Morgan Hill has a total of six recreational facilities citywide. Five are special use facilities and the other two are sports parks. Table 2-7 lists the recreation facilities and their acreages.

**Table 2-7: Morgan Hill Recreation Facility Inventory (2016)**

Facility	Facility Classification	Acres
Aquatics Center	Special Use Facility	8
Centennial Recreation Center	Special Use Facility	5.9
Community & Cultural Center	Special Use Facility	6
El Toro Youth Center*	Special Use Facility	0.3
Friendly Inn Non-Profit Center	Special Use Facility	0
Outdoor Sports Center	Sports Park	38

\* Not counted in the current 2016 level of service calculations



## RECREATION PROGRAMS

### Recreation Programs: Key Findings

- **Residents highly value programming and events** that provide exercise and that are fun and entertaining.
- **Morgan Hill is regularly adding and changing recreation classes** to incorporate new fitness trends and interests. City staff has been successful in adapting to evolving demand with new programs and events.
- **Programs can be better distributed** throughout the City, including in neighborhood parks. The City's program offerings are primarily held at the CRC, CCC, and AC, which may be a barrier to reaching many participants.
- **The City enjoys very high cost-recovery rates** for its programming, which provides ongoing support for program development and scholarship opportunities.
- **Morgan Hill's cultural and historic resources** can be a focal point of education and programming and better integrated with the City's existing system.
- **Community members would like to see more family-friendly events, movies, and concerts** at facilities and in parks throughout the City.
- **Community members identified the costs of classes** as the top reason that they do not participate in programming.
- **Promoting programs, membership and scholarship opportunities** are critical to reaching new audiences and markets and ensuring inclusive participation.
- **There is interest in expanding programs and classes into the City's parks.** Community members showed interest in adult recreation and fitness classes as well as youth programs.
- **The unique partnership with the YMCA of Santa Clara Valley** supports enhanced programming at City recreation facilities.
- **The City's youth programming and services are shaped by the "Developmental Assets" framework,** a widely-used approach to childhood and adolescent development focused on helping adults connect with youth in a positive way that helps young people thrive.

### Recreation Programs System and Needs

The City of Morgan Hill Recreation and Community Services Division provides a wide variety of recreation programs designed for a diverse age range and varied interests. The City offers classes in the following program areas: Education, Special Interest, Art, Dance, Fitness, Sports, Camps, Training, and Aquatics. The City's indoor and outdoor recreation facilities

allow for year-round programming that varies seasonally, ranging from aquatic classes to preschool programs. Programs include classes, sport leagues, sport competitions, youth camps, drop-in activities, and events. The City plays an important role as a facilitator of community services, helping bring essential support for residents of all ages to the south county.

To evaluate the capacity of Morgan Hill's facilities and programs to meet demand, the project team reviewed and analyzed reservation data and considered the observations of staff and consultants. There are many program offerings for preschool-age children, youth, adults, teens, and seniors. The City and its partner, the YMCA, have adopted the Developmental Assets framework as an integral part of its programs and services. The framework identifies 41 assets, which include both external experiences which provide young people with support, empowerment, and boundaries and the internal values, strengths, and commitments that they need to thrive.

The City provides programs geared towards families and groups, including social events and special activities. There are limited programs targeted toward people with disabilities, although there are adaptive open swim times and an adaptive dance event. The City does not currently offer bilingual programs, although it promotes some programs with ads in Spanish. The planning process included an analysis of program registration, City data and strategic plans, and collaboration with City staff to identify gaps and opportunities in the City's offerings and to inform facility recommendations driven by programming needs.

### Membership

The City has unique recreation program capacities with the CRC, which also houses the Senior and Teen Centers. The CRC Memberships Strategic Plan developed in 2015 is updated annually and used to maintain focus on membership needs. The CRC, in partnership with the YMCA, conducts a member satisfaction survey and prime market areas analysis that help support the strategic plan. An analysis concluded that the CRC membership supports residents of all income levels; however, the memberships are not totally aligned with the community in terms of household income and there are opportunities to serve more low income households.

### Health and Wellness

CRC facility operations and classes, including health and wellness programs, are provided through a partnership between the City of Morgan Hill and the Mt. Madonna YMCA. The CRC is the hub for membership-based programs. However, several aquatic-based membership programs are offered at the AC and a small number of membership health and wellness classes are offered at the CCC. At the time of this Master Plan development, the City is planning to expand to CRC with additional space for fitness facilities.

### Aquatic Programs

The City's aquatic programs put into action its commitment to supporting healthy residents throughout their lives. As noted in the Aquatics Strategic Plan (2010), the City values aquatics as a lifetime activity that creates community through improved physical health and wellness, economic development, water safety, and youth development emphasizing respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty. The City's two primarily aquatics programs are swim

lessons, which is the City's largest program outside of CRC membership, and the Recreational Splash Aquatics Swim Team.

### Preschool

The City is a facilitator and partner of valued community services, including the Recreation Preschool Program. The City provides both staffing and facilities for the preschool programs. The City's preschool programs include Little Learners, an enrichment program for three-to-four-year-olds offered two days per week; Kinder Learners, a program for four-to-five-year-olds offered three days per week; and Afternoon Preschool for three-to-five-year-olds offered three days per week. The program is at capacity and has wait lists. At the time of this Master Plan, a proposed expansion to the CCC would provide another classroom for the preschool. The expanded capacity would provide for the growing community need and allow for greater long term cost recovery. The City will need to evaluate the feasibility of expanding the preschool program to meet a growing demand.

### Senior Programs

Currently, the City facilitates the Senior Center by providing programs and services, facility space, and partnering with community based organizations. The City specifically partners with the YMCA to offer the Senior Lunch program with funding from the County of Santa Clara. In 2015, the City developed the Senior Programs and Support Strategy to provide program guidance for Senior Center programming and sustainability. The Senior Center's collaborative funding model supports its broad service area. In 2016, the City adopted an "Age-Friendly" resolution, further supporting its commitment to fulfilling seniors' expanding and diversifying needs. The City will need to evaluate its role in meeting the needs of a growing and diversifying senior population.



## BIKEWAYS AND TRAILS

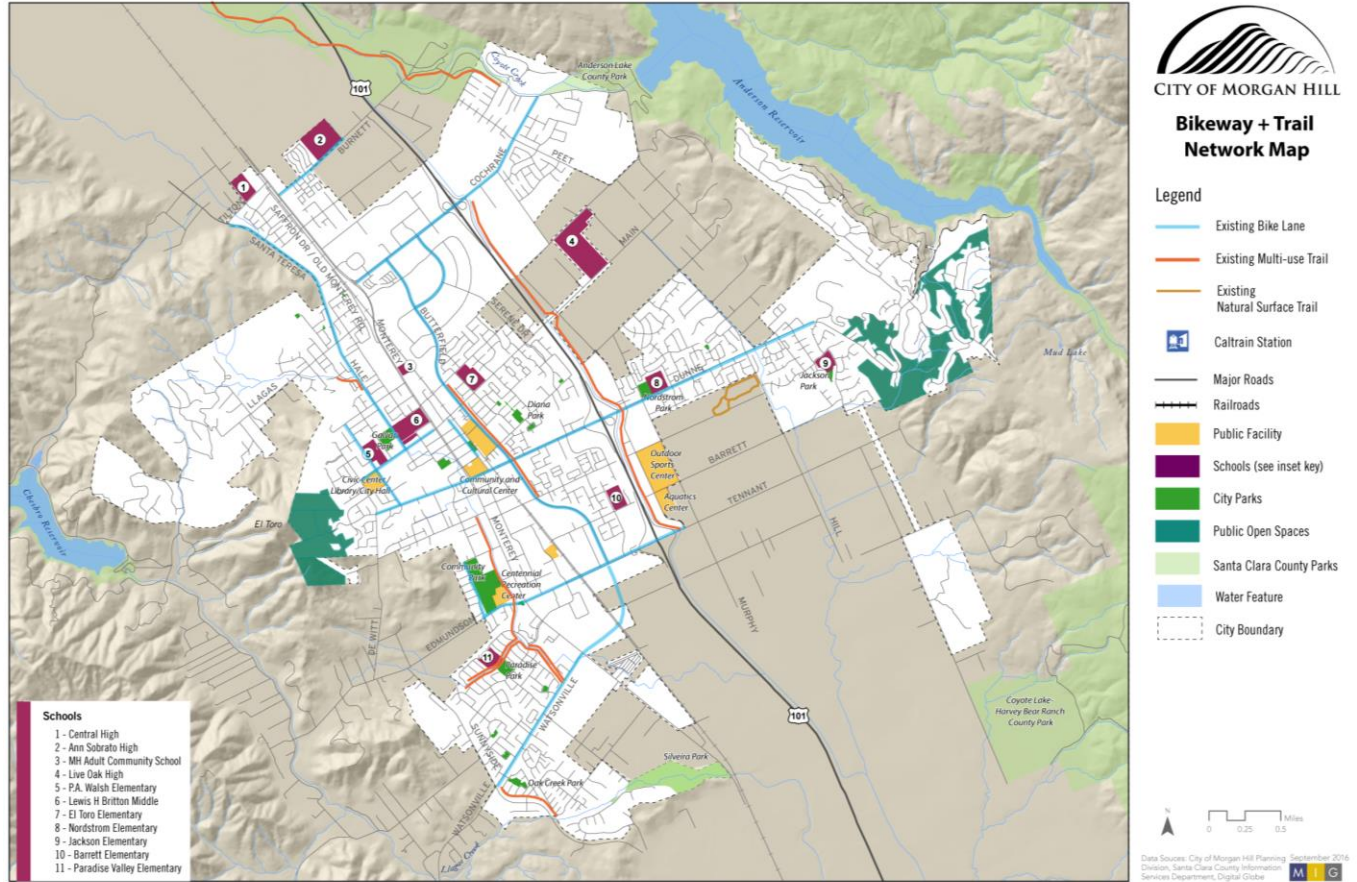
### Bikeways and Trails: Key Findings

- **Public engagement results consistently showed that Morgan Hill residents support safe walkability and bikeability** on off-street trails as well as trails along major travel routes.
- **A connected and robust bikeway network is a top priority for the Morgan Hill Community.** There is a need to improve connections from residential neighborhoods to schools, Downtown, and regional destinations.
- **Community members identified improved bikeway connections to Downtown as a priority.**
- **Highway 101 is a major barrier** for people walking and people riding bicycles traveling east-west. The lack of safe and comfortable crossing options discourages many people from biking and walking between the City's eastern and western neighborhoods.
- **Community members showed a strong desire for bicycle facilities that encourage bicycling among residents of all ages and abilities.** Some bikeways are separate from fast moving car traffic and include few barriers, such as complex intersections or crossing busy streets.
- **There is a gap between the heavily used Coyote Creek Trail and local bikeways.** Residents are interested in accessing regional parks and trails via safe bikeways and community stakeholders would like regional trail users to travel safely into the City.
- **El Toro is the most important trail development project for residents,** although public input also indicated support for loop trails and more natural surface trails in open spaces.
- **Trails and bikeways present many opportunities to partner with other agencies** to better connect residents to regional assets.

### Bikeways and Trails System and Needs

The Morgan Hill bikeways and trails network includes various types of bikeways and trails that provide transportation and recreation opportunities for people who walk, bike, and hike. The City's existing bikeways and trails network developed in segments over time, resulting in a network with limited connectivity. Most of Morgan Hill's existing bikeways are on-street bike lanes. In addition to its on-street bikeways, the City recently developed two multi-use trails—Butterfield Trail (also known as the Butterfield Linear Park) and West Little Llagas Creek Trail—and has plans to expand both. The City is also working to improve the loop trails at Silveira Lake.

Figure 2-9: Existing Bikeways and Trails Map



The project team evaluated and mapped the City’s existing bike and trail network, planned improvements, and findings and feedback from the recent Downtown road diet pilot program. In addition, the team collaborated with the County and other regional partners to identify shared priorities and opportunities for collaboration, and to ensure consistency across plans.

Throughout the process, public input clearly highlighted the need for improved connections to and between City parks, recreation facilities, and popular destinations like Downtown and the Coyote Creek Trailhead. In particular, residents want to see safe bike and pedestrian routes for all ages and abilities, not just experienced cyclists. People traveling through the City by bicycle and walking/rolling experience significant barriers. Community members identified wide streets, busy streets, and no bike lanes as the top barriers to getting to parks, open spaces, facilities, and trails in Morgan Hill. Because of the City’s irregular border, many paths of travel alternate between City and County land, creating challenges to coordinate future improvements and making it difficult for residents to know whom to contact for a specific problem or improvement. While the County is open to roadway enhancements, lack of funding limits the work the County can perform. Many intersections adjacent to bikeways lack bike and pedestrian amenities and improvements that support safe and easy connectivity. Throughout the planning process, community members identified intersections as a major barrier to active transportation.



A more complete bikeways and trails network will provide greater opportunity for physical activity, outdoor recreation, and safe active transportation, and create a truly integrated parks, recreation, bikeways, and trails system.

As part of this planning process and with support from Santa Clara County Health Department and funding from the Centers for Disease Control, the City developed a resource to encourage use of existing bikeways and trails. The Bike Walk Morgan Hill! brochure and map provides information on safe walking and biking and identifies preferred routes to major destinations. It is available from the City and included as Appendix E to this Master Plan.

The following Recreation Facility classifications were established by the previous Master Plan (2001). This Master Plan (2017) recommends new classifications (see Chapter 4) that better serve Morgan Hill's trail system.

**Table 2-8: Bikeway and Trail Classifications (2001)**

Facility	Description
<b>Natural Surface Trail</b>	A path of travel for recreation and/or transportation within a park, natural environment, or designated corridor that is not classified as a highway, road, or street. 100 percent of trail acreage and adjacent recreational uses are included in LOS calculations.
<b>Multi-Use Trail (Class I)</b>	A multi-use trail allows for two-way, off-street pedestrian and bicycle use. Wheelchairs, joggers, skaters, and other non-motorized users are also welcome. These trails are frequently found in parks, along rivers, beaches, and in greenbelts or utility corridors where there are few conflicts with motorized vehicles. 100 percent of trail acreage and adjacent recreational uses are included in LOS calculations.
<b>Bike Lane (Class II)</b>	Bike lanes provide a striped lane for one-way bike travel on a street. Bike lanes that are not buffered are not recommended for future development.
<b>Sidewalk Connections</b>	Sidewalks are used throughout Morgan Hill's trail system when a more robust trail option is not feasible.

The following table includes an inventory of City trails. Trail acreage, unlike bikeways, is included in the City's level of service calculations.

**Table 2-9: Morgan Hill Trails Inventory (2016)**

Trail	Trail Classification	Acres	Miles
Butterfield Trail	Multi-use	2.09	0.8
Madrone Channel Trail	Natural surface (joint-use agreement with Santa Clara County Valley Water District)	6	3



Trail	Trail Classification	Acres	Miles
West Little Llagas Creek Trail	Multi-use (includes some land managed through a joint-use agreement with Santa Clara County Valley District)	1.1	1
Percolation Ponds Trail	Natural surface (joint-use agreement with Santa Clara County Valley Water District)	1.21	1

## PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE

The City is committed to balancing its neighborhood and community parks with its sports and special use facilities. Since the 2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City has tracked its park acreage by the park types described above. The park classifications help to guide the City's park design and planning, while park acreage helps the City determine its level of service (LOS). To better reflect how community members use and would like to use their park and recreation facilities, this plan recommends revisions to the 2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan facility classifications and level of service calculations (see Chapter 4). The Level of Service described below reflects the revised classifications and calculations.

Morgan Hill has established an LOS standard of five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This standard allows the City to determine a Quimby Act Fee and helps with planning for new parks needed to keep pace with development. **The City currently provides an LOS of 3.4 acres/1,000.** There is a need for the City to acquire and develop more land to meet the need of its current and future population.

The classifications and LOS standard provide parameters that guide the development and maintenance of parks in order create equitable recreation opportunities across the system. Community input points to more nuanced differences between the parks. The public engagement results revealed community members' park usage patterns and preferences. Residents' favorite parks are larger community and regional parks that are also the most-frequently visited parks. Residents value that these parks offer many activities for a range of ages and interests in one location. Community members frequently travel outside of their neighborhood, and sometimes even the City, to access their favorite parks and in search of diverse amenities (see Figure 2-7). There is demand for diversified play experiences. The Downtown pop-up parks were a great success and residents would like to see some of these elements in other City parks. Community members expressed support for multigenerational amenities, flexible play experiences, and nature play.

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